Original Research Article

The "Principality of Existence" Approach to the Identity of Urban Facades*

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Abstract | The difference in the form of Iranian cities between the present and the past and the eclecticism in the view of today's cities are interpreted as unoriginality or crisis of identity by some critics of architecture and urban planning. Meanwhile, the elimination of the body of the traditional cities and the creation of a huge change in the urban bodies in terms of form, material, and color of the buildings compared to the past is what justifies the elimination of the identity. It is as if proving the originality of the urban facades lies in preserving the bodily ornaments of the past. Also, variation and formal changes do not go with maintaining the identity or character, insofar as it is acknowledged as identity crisis, and imposes considerable expenses on the urban management for reviving the lost identity. This article seeks to find the philosophical reason for this perception among urban experts and practitioners. By referring to the ideas of Mulla Sadra in the written sources, this qualitative research proceeds to conclude through rational and philosophical reasoning.

The philosophical innovation of Mulla Sadra, "Principality of Existence", against "Principality of Quiddity", proves that identity is a matter of being. The expression of the motion in the essence of the object means the negation of consistency and stagnation and the proof of dynamism in the "identity". This means that instead of relying on the characteristics of quiddity such as constant figure, tone, and material, one should look for existential attributes such as humanism, order, and righteousness, which have accompanied the urban appearance through its history. Likewise, the identity crisis must be sought in the absence of existential attributes such as plurality, order, plus the dictation of fixity and stagnation. Thus, the resolutions of this approach are against the Principality of Quiddity, non-figurative, and, in fact, epistemological. At this view, the urban facade organization plans, which seek restoration and repetition of the form, material, and colors of the past to it, do not have a firm philosophical basis.

Introduction | The matter of "identity", has always been there through the course of history. It has been addressed from different perspectives. Although many thinkers including philosophers, anthropologists, and sociologists have tried to discover its dimensions with different methods, the subject of identity is still drawing attention, and the question of "identity" is ongoing. Today, one of the factors of the proliferation of this phrase is the happening of a phenomenon known as "identity crisis". Such that what is important

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is not the identity itself, rather the identity crisis (Irandoost, 2008). In Iran and Middle-East, the modernist hurricane of identity is among prerequisites that have compelled many experts of different fields, authorities, and religion, politics, and social thinkers to ponder about it because of religious, political, cultural, and economic expenses and complications due to identity crisis.

One of the critical points of identity crisis in the field of architecture and urban planning in Iran is the comparison of the city between the present and past, and showing the essential difference in this regard. The diversity of the form of the buildings and eclecticism of Tehran is interpreted as "unoriginality" by some critics. Some have tried to give identity to the architecture while some others consider the identity as an imaginary and unachievable item in today's architecture (Hojjat, 2005). The city's identity is so important to the urban planning and architecture thinkers that about nineteen notions have been identified for it (Piran, 2005). A review over the prepared or executed plans or the ratifications of the authorities of organizations, from the Supreme Council for Planning and Architecture of Iran to municipalities and city councils, on the issue of identity formation proves the importance of the matter of identity and justifies large investments to solve the identity crisis in the urban facades in Iran.

Research question

Why do some experts and urban facades authorities, interpret the diversity of urban facades as an identity crisis? On what philosophical basis, repeating yesterday in today is the only way to create identity? And, how identity formation feasible on a changing basis?

Hypothesis

The recognition of the being of the urban facades crisis depends on the take of the concept of identity to a large degree. It appears that if the "identity" is viewed at the philosophical perspective of Mulla Sadra, an unambiguous idea can be found on the fluidity of identity, in a way that it leads to the renewal of the current mold of the identity issue and its crisis.

Research background

The issues of the urban identity and urban facades have been examined mainly since the 1960s and 1970s in the West, and then in Iran. Most of the articles written so far in Iran in this field are based on the findings of Western thinkers from humanistic and socialist perspectives, and the number of articles

written based on Iranian-Islamic philosophy is very small. About Islamic philosophy and its association with identity, the study "Concept of Entity and a Philosophical Approach to Entity and City Nature" published in 2016 in Bagh-e Nazar journal can be referred (Vaezi & Alimardani, 2018). This article compares and displays the difference between the notion of identity in Western and Islamic philosophy, and considers the natural and man-made elements as components of the essence of identity. Also, this essay associates the degree of identity to the human and natural roots of the setting. However, it does not considers the philosophy of existence as a basis.

In modern Iranian architecture and urban planning records, the term "identity" comes with the word "crisis" and "identity crisis" is a topic on which several articles have been written. According to Pirnia, in a time that is deemed as modern Iranian architecture and urban planning, from the post-Qajar era to the present, a sort of fracture has happened in Iranian architecture and urban planning. Such that the string of continuity and continuous development of the previous ways has been broken (Pirnia, 2007). In his book "Identity of the City", Behzadfar claims that now, because of the substantial distance between some cases of contemporary architecture and urban planning with corresponding ones of the original Islamic, several intellectuals talk about the rise of identity crisis in this architecture and urban planning (Behzadfar, 2008). Additionally, Abdolhamid Noghrehkar writes about this in "An Introduction to Islamic Identity in Architecture and Urban Planning" (Noghrehkar, 2008). Hojjat claims, "In our present architecture, being unique is the most prominent thing" (Hojjat, 2007, 8), and this has yielded a "formal explosion" that adds to the colors of this 40-piece quilt daily. It is clear that giving originality to "difference" conflicts with having a "fixed identity", and bears the entropy that has saturated the arena of modern cities. "This disaster, which has increasingly emerged in the last century, is described by a general deficiency in the design of the building, meaningless imitation, disturbance, and unoriginality. Hence, it is not inapt that it is called the "identity crisis" (Nadimi, 1991, 2). Among present Islamic scholars, Hossein Nasr, whose teachings constitute the foundations of traditionalism in modern Iranian architecture, highlights this point (Nasr, 1987).

Methodology

To avoid falling into the wide range of definitions of identity in various fields of thought, and to reach consensus that characterize the truth, this study

answers the research question from the viewpoint of Mulla Sadra's philosophy -as the principal and reliable philosophical stream in Iran that seeks the root of any direction in "being". By employing qualitative research, in this essay, the explanation and interpretation of Mulla Sadra's opinions on the "Principality of Existence" and the substantial motion, which has been the predominant philosophical school in Iran since the time of Mulla Sadra, in written sources are matched with one another. The subject of identity is further addressed through philosophical reasoning.

Theoretical foundations
• Definition of identity and its paradox
"Hoviat" (Identity) is an Arabic word derived from "Hova" which is a third-person singular masculine with two main meanings of absolute "similarity" and "distinction" (Moharrami, 2004). According to Dehkhoda, the term "identity" means "identification". This meaning sometimes refers to external being and sometimes to quiddity with individuality (*Loghat-Nama,* 1998, s.v. "Hoviat"). In Persian, the phrase "In-Hamani" (meaning sameness) has been selected for the word "Hoviat". In Western languages, "Identité" in French and "Identity" in English, equal with "Identitas" in Latin, are the equivalent words for "Hoviat". Identity has two chief meanings: the first expresses absolute "similarity" and the second is "distinction", which assumes consistency and continuity over time. Therefore, the notion of identity (in its literal sense) sets two possible relationships between things and individuals: on the one hand, similarity, and on the other hand, distinction (Jenkins, 2012, 5). Overall, it can be assumed that what is recorded in Persian, Arabic, and Latin lexical references on identity mainly revolve around the notions of "similarity", "distinction", and also "individuality". Part of the diversity in the definition of identity is due to its paradoxical quiddity. In other words, on the one hand, this word means historical continuity, and on the other hand, it is constantly subject to the process of redefining and reproducing; this makes it challenging to present a comprehensive definition of it (Afroogh, 2008). According to some thinkers, this paradox and the extensive use of this word in many fields of thought, hinders us to accurately say what this word refers to.

• "Identity" as a philosophical subject
As mentioned, the word "Identity" in Latin has two principal meanings: the first represents the concept of absolute similarity, while its second meaning refers to the notion of distinction, which assumes stability and continuity over time. Therefore, the idea of identity, in its literal sense, sets two potential associations between objects and individuals. That is similarity on the one hand and difference on the other; similarity to within (self), and distinction from the outside (others). More specifically, in philosophical terms, identity is composed of the essence (commonality) and section (differentiation). As stated earlier, Dehkhoda regards identity as the individuality of the object, its essence, and the truth. But, knowing this doesn't solve the problem, rather it is the start of the discussion. Because according to philosophers, identity sometimes refers to "quiddity" and sometimes to "being". Thus, it should not be said that the discussion is done just by knowing that identity indicates what the object is acknowledged by. It is because the philosophers would ask what the individuality of the object lies within. Is it the quiddity or the being? This fundamental question is so significant that it has put Islamic philosophers into two main philosophical groups (Fallah, 2004). One group believes that the individuality of everything lies within its quiddity. In other word, the individuality equals the quiddity. Thus, it is known as the "Principality of Quiddity". This idea was the predominant school of thought until Mulla Sadra. Whereas the other group considers the individuality of the object, its truth, and its essence in its "being", equaling the individuality with the being. It is thus known as the "Principality of Existence".

• Principality of Quiddity or Existence
The idea of Principality of Existence versus the Principality of Quiddity is an innovation of Islamic philosophers. Philosophers from the time of Greece to the era of Mulla Sadra supported the "Principality of Quiddity.but Mulla Sadra suggested this issue at the ontological discussions. In a way that after him, most Islamic philosophers have been in favor of "Principality of Existence" (Motahhari, 1990, 60). But between being and quiddity, which refers to the single reality of things? Are our reality and objectivity based on the idea of being or quiddity? (Organization for Educational Research and Planning, 2018). Although everything has a quiddity and a being, we recognize that in outside one's mind it is only one thing. For instance, we see only the tree or man or the construction in front of us -not the separate being of the tree and the tree itself or the being of man and man himself. It is because every external object - in other words, the realized and existing object- is only one thing, and not two. Therefore, the realization of things is either by their quiddity or by their being. One of them has "originality" and the other is its shadow. In other words, the human mind, abstracts one from the other.

As a philosophical reason, quiddity is not ever joined with the true and external being and its impacts. It is because the truth of things is what has the effect of that thing, and the effect of objects always arises from their being. Many essences that arise in our thoughts, scripts, and talks are products of our minds and have no external impact. Therefore, they are not "realized" still. Mulla Sadra maintains that when quiddity does not have a "perpetual connection" with being, it cannot be chief factor in the being of external beings. But in practice, we notice that the being of external realities- not imaginative ones -stands on its own and does not require another "being" to "be" and for realization. Because being is not "accident" for them, but is "inherent" and cannot be segregated. In fact, being is not an accident for quiddity. Rather, it is quiddity that covers the external "being" and "realized" as a mental frame and linguistic and customary attire. With another look at the matter of quiddity and being, Mulla Sadra says, we sometimes imagine quiddity minus the being (for illustration, Phoenix, which is credible in the mind but has no external being). It means that we ignore its external being (while this is not the case with being). In other words, quiddity is not so that it is constantly joined with external realization. So "it is the being that is the principle in the realization of things and beings." (ibid). Now that we have reached the Principality of Existence in the duality of quiddity and being, we must see how the changes - or in philosophical terms the substantial motion of the object (here the urban facade) - happens such that notwithstanding the change in quiddity (shape, color, materials), its identity is still preserved.

• **Substantial motion**

Every movement or development occurs in this way: the object leaves the state in which it was and increasingly approaches the state that it can accomplish. An unripe apple that can ripe, a teenager that can grow old, and a sapling that can evolve into a mature tree can be stated to have moved whenever it constantly and continuously, not abruptly and suddenly, leaves its initial state. Hence with each move, the moving object steadily and continuously leaves something to find another. It is this constant deterioration and incident that constitutes the quiddity of the movement (Soroush, 2014, 26). The continuity of motion, substance, and time confirm that these things are essentially continuous, and that continuity is a necessity of their identity and reality. In the character of such beings, unity is intertwined with the multiplicity. While a piece of motion can be split into several components, these various components

do not exist in it de facto: one can only assume that they can come into being. In other words, the unity of motion exist and realized, but its multiplicity is a potential and underlying plurality. Hence when we have a movement, we have a being in front of us - neither multiple movements nor consequent halts. The unity of motion is a continuous unity, which is the same as individual unity. That is when we have a piece of motion in front of us - whether we look at its origin or its destination - we are looking at one entity in both cases. Changing of object does not take away its personal unity. All beings whose continuity (dimensionality) is joined with their identity have an extensive being. However, this dispersion and expansion does not deprive them of the unity of personality and does not make them suffer from "multiplicity of personality" (ibid, 27). That is, the question of what becomes "the object's self" in the substantial motion is a question resulting from the Principality of Quiddity perspective. The object's self, according to the "Principality of Existence", is the being of the object, and motion is also a form of its being. In this view, in "substantial motion," the object's self is the moving being, not something that is in motion. With these themes, the renewal of accidents is achievable only through the renewal of the substance; a continuous renewal, compatible with the preservation of object's individuality.

Discussion
• **The "essential" and the "existential" identity of the Urban Facade**

The outcome of the philosophical introductions is that, in general, If we attribute the "identity" of the city to its "quiddity", there will be dos and don'ts and consequences, and if we refer to its "being", there will be different, but reciprocal dos and don'ts and consequences. In the case of belief in the Principality of Quiddity (form, material, color) and not approving movement in substance, and belief only in accidental motion, identity will be an essential, steady, and static reality. Provided that we choose Sadra's approach "Principality of Existence" and believe in "substantial motion," we will recognize identity as an existential, changeable, and dynamic truth. So, there are two notions of identity: one essential, fixed, and static, and the other existential, variable, and dynamic. The judgment of these two extends to the judgment between the two schools of "Principality of Existence" and the Principality of Quiddity. To be able to speak about identity, we do not need to consider fixed and variable parts for it. By considering continuity in change and considering identity as a dynamic and

changeable phenomena, there is no longer the problem of disconnecting "this" from "the same" -which was presented as a paradox in the idea of identity. By adopting the "Principality of Existence" as opposed to the "Principality of Quiddity", one can surely state that we will have an identity crisis when we becomes stable and static, not when we alter or are in change. This is while identity crises are essentially deemed in changing -not in fixity (Fallah, 2004) (Table 1). Choosing the view of the Principality of Existence does not certainly mean that authentication or understanding of individuality is not plausible in the fixity of the object. This is the matter of "originality" or "Principality of Quiddity" or being that has several consequences. Certainly, the maintenance of the traditional shape of a historic city in the present time induces its identity and individuality to the viewer. But the transcendence of this sort of preservation is the decrement of identity to form, and the taking away of the dynamism. That is, Mulla Sadra's definition of "substantial motion",the continuity of motion, the paradox of similarity and difference in association with continuity will no longer exist in the definition of identity. From this view, identity is not a definite and fixed thing, but is continually reconstructed (Bashiriyeh, 2004) and is an additive thing that forms through the course of time and changes during history (see Table 1).

• Identity crisis of urban facades

As discussed in background section, according to some architecture and urban planning specialists, because of the significant difference between some modern and Islamic cases of architecture and urban planning, the status of identity is recognized as critical. Burhan Ghalioun, a Syrian intellectual, puts it another way, "The identity crisis we are challenging in the world is owing to the loss of identity signs of the masses of the people whose cultures are not able to sustain themselves in the arena of the global struggle. The struggle is against the prominent media that dictate their presence on countries regardless of geographical borders." Yet, this view of the crisis does not tell whether the cases of authentic Islamic architecture and urban planning are definite and fixed. Are the "identity signs of the masses" static or dynamic? Why these signs should be maintained and why not maintaining them causes a crisis? (Fallah, 2004). From Mulla Sadra's philosophical point of view, the result of accepting the authenticity of quiddity versus being is that any variation in the physical symbols of a city leads to an identity crisis.

The result of not believing in the dynamism of identity is that the solution to the identity crisis in the contemporary Iranian city is operational and objective. City authorities assume that if the form of the city is organized, the identity would return to it. But if we consider the individuality of the object (or its identity or its reality and quiddity) as the being of the city and adopt the "substantial motion" as defined in Sadra's wisdom, we will no longer have the problem of losing the object. Also, if the real crisis happens, we will seek its resolution in epistemological matters. In the process of change and movement of beings -although intricate as cities- their "identity" is not lost. Through movement, a new identity is not achieved provided that the motion of that phenomenon is constant and permanent (continuous). The moving object invariably finds a new identity and transcends the former boundaries of its being. However, and a thousand buts, these new identities create a single personal identity due to continuity (connection) of being (Irandoost, 2008). Today it is not philosophically acceptable that being and becoming are opposed to each other, and "being" means fixity, stagnation, and surviving of the identity, while "becoming" means alteration and movement. "Being" is not equivalent to "becoming", but "becoming" itself is a sort of "being". Being and becoming can be added together. Soroush states in his book The Restless Quiddity of the Universe, For Mulla Sadra, "being" is of two sorts: fixed and fluid. That is why it is not the case that being and maintaining one's self and character contrasts with becoming and changing. The "self" of fluid beings is the same as their alteration" (Soroush, 2014, 30).

The adoption of movement in the essence of the city and the principality of existence over quiddity free the identity from the paradox of similarity and distinction in the definition, and brings the discussion to where

Table 1. Comparison of the two approaches of "Principality of Existence" and "Principality of Quiddity" to identity. Source: Authors.

Approach	Subject	Dominant philosophical school	Identity indication	Crisis happening terms
Principality of Quiddity	Quiddity	From Greece era to Mulla Sadra's time	Fixed, static	Variability, fluidity
Principality of Existence	Being	Since Mulla Sadra until now	Variable, dynamic	Fixity, stagnation

identity cannot be reduced to quiddity or form. The idea of "Principality of Existence" suggests that we need to define our identity with dynamic attributes. We know that fluidity and dynamism do not arise in the frame of the originality of form. It is because formalism is the representation of fixity. Hence, it should be searched in the scope of concepts. It is relying on notions that assist us to highlight what can be done instead of emphasizing what we have. In more detail, it is better to define the identity by attributes such as plurality, humanism and order, rather than seeking it in particular forms, specific tones, and predetermined materials in the urban facade of Tehran. Literally speaking, instead of relying on names of essence (e.g. Stone, Glass, and Concrete) whose being depends on themselves and are normally tangible, we need to use semantic names and attributes such as humanism, privacy, order, and righteousness, whose being depends on others and are ever fluid. By defining identity with tone, form, and materials, we will feel an identity crisis after any change. By affirming the concept of "principality of existence" and "substantial motion", it can be stated that if quiddity vocalizes the "quiddity" of an object, identity describes its "being". If "quiddity," or quiddity, details the changes that happen in the essence of the object, considering the function of time in "substantial motion," "being" takes shape in improvements in which historically performs an essential part. In more detail, it is in the context of the time that the identity, or "being", is perpetually developing.

It is worth noting that "time and motion have a tight and intertwined relationship, and without time, no motion can be realized. To the extent that the realization of time is not feasible without some sort of constant and continuous movement and transformation. Even the passage of progressive elements of time is itself a sort of progressive transformation of motion for the temporal object" (Mesbah, 1998, 185). Therefore, time is joined with substantial motion. Here, if we regard identity as an existential thing, it is clear that there is a link between identity and time. On the other hand, as has been stated, if we rely on "notions" instead of "form", the longer the residence of symbols of being such as, order, justice, righteousness, in the object, the higher identity can be considered for it. Likewise, it can be said that the identity of the urban facade is lost when the imitation aspect is the dominant aspect in it. For illustration, referring to foreign notions from the internal culture can create the rupture and unoriginality of the urban facade.

Conclusion

If we view the identity of the urban facade from Mulla Sadra's perspective, the approach to identity, as a matter of being or quiddity, has various requirements and outcomes. In the former, identity is agreeable with fluidity and dynamism, while in the latter, it is sought in fixity. From the quiddity point of view, the past and present of the modern urban facade are ruptured owing to the change in quiddity or body, and the absence of a formal link between the embodiments of these two is considered a crisis symptom. However, from the being point of view in which not the characteristics of form and body but the existential properties are original, the variation in quiddity of the city and the urban facade is not critical and a sign of identity crisis. If throughout history, the being- for example, of the city of Tehran - is the outcome of religious, mythical, and cultural events, its quiddity is how to respond to these semantic events in the formal mold of the city of Tehran. Identity crisis in its existential sensation happens when, for instance, the concept of multiplicity or righteousness is eliminated from the Iranian minds for the same cultural, religious, or mythical reasons (Table 2). In a perspective that bases the principle on fixity and constancy, identity is measured by physical features that, although measurable, entirely deprive it of its potential for change. Since formalism is the most visible result of stability, the departure from formalism is considered a crisis.

The identity of the urban facade fails when, for illustration, when the imitation aspect is the dominant aspect in it. In more detail. For instance, in urban landscape, referring to foreign ideas instead of Iranian culture can cause unoriginality of the urban facade. In other words identity crisis happens when there is a general alteration in the mind or existential notions and attributes - not necessarily or merely in the domain of the urban facade.

The contemporary situation of modern Iranian urban facade management shows that the concept of the "Principality of Existence", notwithstanding its scientific and academic dominance, has no position in superstructures like urban management. In these places, originality yet depends on the quiddity or the manner of the urban façade and the answer to the crisis is to renew the face of the city to predetermined or traditional structures through the use of modernist or traditionalist approaches. Accepting the existential attributes as an identity-forming factor, at least in execution, can recover the immense costs that urban management is spending now on rebuilding the appearance of the city to its historical form.

Table 2. Comparison of the dos and don't and outcomes of the quiddity and being approaches to the urban facade based on the philosophy of the Principality of Existence of Mulla Sadra. Source: Authors.

Philosophical basis of the approach to the urban facade	The identity criteria	The basis of the grade of identity	The crisis type	Crisis reasons	Crisis solution
The Principality of Existence	Existential attributes such as plurality, righteousness, humanism, order, justice	Duration of accompaniment with existential attributes	Subjective	Cultural, religious, mythical	Epistemological
The Principality of Quiddity	Form attributes like colors, materials, and figures	History	Objective	Any kind of change in the form	Non-epistemological

Endnotes

*This paper is extracted from Ph.D. Thesis of "Reza Kasravi" entitled "Landscape Approach to the Crisis of Disorder in Tehran's Urban Facades" which conducted under supervision of Dr. "Seyed Amir Mansouri" and Dr. "Nasser Barati", in Faculty of Architecture, University of Tehran, Iran.

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